



## SUMMER

By the time they are six to eight weeks old, **red** wolf pups are exploring outside the den and moving about actively in play. They spend less and less time inside, and their natural curiosity makes them anxious to explore under the supervision of the adults who never allow them to stray too far from safety.

By early summer, the pups are too active to stay around the den and still too young to hunt and to keep up with the adults. The pups and their mother abandon the den, and the pups are moved to a **rendezvous site** for the next stage in their development. This move can take place when the pups are as young as three weeks, particularly if the adults have been disturbed. Typically, however, the pups are moved between eight and ten weeks of age.

The rendezvous site is often an open area with a water source and a cluster of trees or rocks for shelter. A wolf pack may remain at one rendezvous site throughout the summer months, or it may move to several of these “resting places.” Here, in the relative safety of a sheltered spot, the adventurous pups begin to learn the skills they will need to survive. Wolf childhood is long because there is so much to learn – how to hunt, how to **communicate**, how to assume responsibility within the **hierarchy** of the pack. The pups are watched over by the adults, but despite their constant care, a wolf pup has only a 50 percent chance of surviving its first year. Other **predators** may kill young pups, or they may die of starvation and disease.

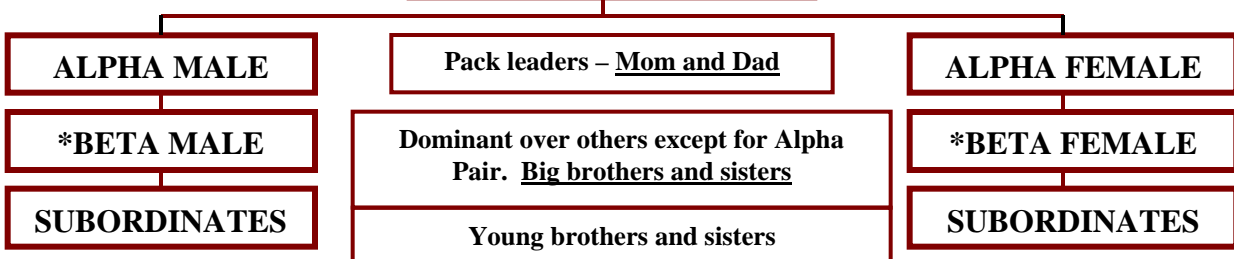
By late summer, the pups are large and strong. Soon they will be able to travel with the adults. As the pups interact with the adults and with each other, they learn that each wolf has a position within the hierarchy of the pack. This hierarchy is critical to the survival of the pack. Wolves live by strict rules of cooperation, and frequent reinforcement of who is dominant and who is submissive keeps relationships peaceful and harmonious among the pack members. Adults discipline unruly pups by pinning them to the ground with a paw or mouth. Pups establish a hierarchy among themselves by playing with bones and tugging at pieces of hide. Timid pups are routinely bossed by the more dominant siblings.



### VOCABULARY

1. rendezvous site
2. communicate
3. hierarchy
4. predator

## HIERARCHY



\* Not “designated” in many wolf packs.